

# HOPELESS TO TRY TO CURB THE CITY'S GROWTH BY LAW

Congestion Problem Is Not to Be Solved Merely by Cutting Off Skyscraper Building

This is the first of a series of three articles that discuss New York's congestion problem. The second article will appear in next Sunday's SUN. It will discuss a number of proposed solutions of the problems of city growth and congestion. The third and last article will give the details of an immediate solution of the most urgent congestion problem, that of relocating New York's garment industries. The plan proposed is believed by its supporters to be adequate, feasible and efficient and pregnant with suggestions for the future housing of the varied manufacturing and residential populations that must cluster about the world's greatest trading center.

By MILO HASTINGS.

THE late lamented Elbert Hubbard's favorite story ended: "One horsehoe means good luck, but a wagonload of horsehoes is junk." Likewise one Woolworth Building is a thing of beauty, a city's pride, a testimony of mechanical and architectural achievement—and a monument to Mr. Woolworth. But a city full of fifty-five story buildings would be a calamity.

Did Mr. Woolworth have a right to build a fifty-five story building? and if so, why should this right be henceforth denied and similar buildings en legislated against as the Connecticut blue laws forbade silver buckles?

Few rights are inalienable when too many people wish to exercise them at one time and place. And there are too many people in New York who need light and air and their right not to be stepped on to allow Mr. Woolworth to have many imitators. So we have the new laws limiting building heights and the "use district" laws telling where we may live, where we may trade, what we may make and where we may make it.

Only ten years ago the twin flagpoles of the Park Row Building, breaking through the ragged skyline of Manhattan, marked the tallest building in the world. Shooting up like mushrooms in the nights of those brief years came our fairytale of towers, and we held our breath and wondered where would be the next. And now, ten years a New Yorker, we go down to meet the incoming Western cousin at a Jersey ferry, and, pointing out the old Park Row towers midheight in a carnival of architecture, we claim all above their level as our very own New York and feel metropolitan indeed.

It is our Manhattan; and as one digs into the ashes of Pompeii to learn of the past, so we gaze into New York's filmy sky to learn of the future. We did not say, "See, it is finished," but blinked wonderingly at the gold trimmed tower flashing in the sootless sunlight, read of the strength of steel columns guaranteed not to buckle short of a hundred stories, and awaited the super-Woolworth.

But our fancy born castles that outtopped the steel are now tumbled to the commonplaces of an eleven car express, till, shooting beneath streets and parks and rivers we came out high and dry on a steel stilted viaduct atop the houses of another city.

There is nothing that gives one so keen a sense of the future laughing at the past as a map of New York with the highways printed in blue and the projected subways linked in with red. For in New York when a man walks abroad his echoing footsteps tell him that he treads on hollow ground, and from out the depths comes the chugging of the rock drill, the quaking boom of the electrically shot blast beneath its blanket of woven rope, the muffled beat of air pumps as they drive their mole-bird shields beneath the sill of harbor-digging, tunnelling, boring, mining and excavating; a never ending rebuilding of an eternally unfinished city; a ceaseless catacombing of our restless foot—not for canyoned homes, but for the rush and roar of traffic.

Then came the doughnut wheeled low wagons frightening milady's dancing carriage horses off the avenue. In this too, we gloried and we watched the gaps fill up. Till a show moving endless procession might have told a jostling Martian that the king of the world had died. Moving, halted by semaphores, wriggling on, it was like a speckled black serpent of traffic, worming and sliding along on asphalt greased with the oil of its dripped wheels. And we cared not for traffic officials or traffic problems, for traffic too was our pride of growth. And so we gloried in a Manhattan that was filling up—filling up and overflowing, crowding and quivering like new swarmed bees in a too small hive—and we were of it.

Starting at the southern extremity of a slender island, there were three directions for New York to grow—up, down and north. And north it grew by hand and belt and stratum till today one can start at Central Park and, excavating toward the Battery, unearth more superposed civilizations than when digging downward on the site of Nineveh or Babylon. Church spires are overshadowed by skyscrapers; the columns of old colonial mansions stand in the rear of downtown stables, and uptown stables are made into restaurants de luxe where one pays a dollar extra to eat in the box stall.

So speedily was Manhattan's archeological shift that one could see the minute hand move. Ten years ago Cooper Union was a resort for hoboes and Fourteenth street was already looking shabby. Twenty-third street had its brief day, and by the time the residence on Thirty-fourth street put its clock hands one clock hand at night in Union Square, one was the ruins of Brooklyn Bridge. And yet this headlong uptown race was all the pride of growth. So we looked on and pronounced it good and wondered who would build the first skyscraper facing Central Park and if Caruso would live long enough to be starred in a Harlem opera house.

But Manhattan Island is a body of civic pride surrounded by salty water, and thereby came our first awakening to the fact that all that grows in radius of a green hill far away from the old wall that they built to keep out the Indians; and when Mr. Murray gave up the dairy business and sold his farm the city bid in the highest peak of Murray Hill for a water reservoir. On the foundations of that reservoir the New York Public Library now stands.

A few blocks to the northeast, gouged out of solid mica-schist, is one of the two great gateways of the world; a little further to the southwest is the other one. In this area, within a mile radius of the top of Murray Hill, is now the heart and glory of the metropolis.

Within this area are the greatest hotels, the finest theatres, the most magnificent railroad stations, and the best appointed shops of all the world. Can these things be moved? If so, where shall we move them? Or shall they be equidistant, overshadowed and elbowed into obscurity by the mere making of trousers for Chicago and petticoats for New Orleans?

And there is an Apollon where are no crosses hung, and straight as a race track at Ormond Beach it runs from the oasis of Washington Square Park, it sinks into oblivion above the Nineties. It is your Fifth avenue and mine, and the novelists, and thereon we want to walk of Easter Sunday and carry canes. And shall the first ladies of the land as they yawn and look out of the Waldorf windows at 9 A. M. gaze into other windows where for three hours the sewing machine girl has been sewing machine lace on lingerie for the second ladies of Waco and Walla Walla?

It is not mere kowtowing to snobbery that would make us wish to keep Murray Hill sacred to the elite. But there is a place for everything, and a good many things in New York are getting out of place. And all this misplacing and replacing is expensive.

When residences are remodelled for stores or stores are vacated because factories move next door there is tremendous cost and waste. It is the economic drive that forces these changes, but there is money lost as well as made, and uncertainty and chaos reign in real estate. A man pulls down a four story brownstone and puts up a ten story loft, gaining thereby certain increase of rentals; but all his neighbors lost on his account till they, too, succumb to the change.

Men have built lofts on Fifth avenue for selfish gain and their profits have been brief. A single loft building in the midst of high class office and store buildings is profitable at first, as the address seems to give the manufacturer exclusiveness, but when the factory atmosphere has driven out the high priced neighbor that gave that

## IN SALVAGE THE RACE IS NOT ALWAYS TO THE SWIFT

THE vagaries of fortune that sometimes attend the business of seafaring were well illustrated by the case of the Italian ship *Ninfa*, dismantled recently, in a West Indian hurricane and afterward towed into Havana practically a floating wreck.

When the *Ninfa* was brought into Havana she was in tow of the steamer *Commodore Rollins*, the smallest vessel flying the flag of the United Fruit Company. Before the *Commodore Rollins* sighted the battered sailing vessel the *Calamare*, a 10,000 ton ship and largest of the United Fruit Company's fleet, had been standing by the *Ninfa* for several hours.

While it was a question of saving life Capt. Jensen of the *Calamare* felt that he should not leave her. He was bound from Havana for Colon with a large number of passengers.

The salvage went to the *Commodore Rollins*. It is expected to amount to more than \$100,000, and that is why the officers and crew of the *Calamare* were disappointed when they arrived here on the return voyage and told about it.

"If we had been bound the other way we could have towed her into Havana and picked up a very neat sum," said one of the officers. "As it was we had to keep on because of our mails and passengers—and the little *Ninfa* gets the dough."

The *Ninfa* was a vessel of 1,840 tons and was bound from Genoa to Havana with a valuable cargo.



Hardly space for another car. Fifth avenue and Thirty-fifth street.

sense of quality the region soon becomes a wilderness of lofts, and all rents go down, till the daring Samson who tumbled down the temple of values is crushed along with the Canaanites. In such a manner land and rental values on lower Fifth avenue have been cut in half.

And so with the increasing realization that no man buildeth unto himself and the growing consciousness of our future have come our city planners whose dreams are now being crystallized into law. Not being able to build subways fast enough to keep up with the growing daytime housing capacity of the lower island, they now would stem the tide of congestion by drawing a chalk mark in the air and saying "Thou shalt not cross this deadline on the sky."

And likewise against this unwanted mixing of the weavers and the makers our engineer trained civic servants are parking off our island and saying black is black and white is white and we want no pepper and salt town where the workers and players and the goers and the doers shall be mixed.

But the ways of the law are tedious and cautious altogether, and it disturbs not the mistakes heretofore made. Fifth avenue below Twenty-third street is already lost to the glory of the name, and up as far as Thirty-fourth street at morning and evening rush hours and from 12 till 2 o'clock one can look upon a sea of faces—entirely too many faces and very much too much alike.

These workers of the garment trades are under the flag and Constitution guaranteed their right to walk to work; and under the rights of labor they are privileged to take their noon rest in little smoking sidewalk groups before the doors of their workshops. And yet fine ladies will not wish their skirts through crowds of working men who smoke their nooning before their shop. And where fine skirts will not wish fine goods are not displayed and palm gardens will not thrive.

And because there are too many smoking faces and swishing skirts some one must move out. Thus far the factories have done the moving in and the fine ladies and the fine shops have done the moving out. They have moved uptown, and again uptown, and uptown yet again, but now the uptown is getting scarce and the old guard of commercial and social aristocracy is digging trenches for a

At Fifth avenue and Thirty-second street any day at noon.

last stand and sending out Save New York skirmishing parties to show the tailors off the sidewalk and drive the garment workers back into Delancey street and Grand.

This battle between the high rental occupants and the left occupying industries is not a new one. It has been waged below Twenty-third street and the left tenants have won. But they have not been content with their winnings south of the Flatiron.

Like little poor girls tugging after little rich girls, the factories have pursued the stores uptown. But they are not dressed nicely enough and they are spoiling the party, for you know you can't have a nice party when more than half the folk come in their everyday work clothes. And so the nicely dressed ones appointed committees to explain to the ones who came in their work clothes that they weren't wanted and to ask them to go home.

The history of this warfare between the makers on the one hand and the sellers and buyers on the other reads like a tale of children trying to dam back a tide with sand. When the modern steel structure with its better light and air first preempted the lower



Midday sidewalk throng, Fifth avenue and Twenty-second street.

## Father Knickerbocker's Healthy Child Will Continue to Outgrow His Present Very Limited Wardrobe of Streets and Avenues Despite Any Artificial Restraint

avenue the clothing trades began to move in. Soon this noon throng of tailors on the sidewalk began to crowd off the "best foot" of the city and a Fifth Avenue Association was formed and began to cogitate on ways to keep the sidewalks clear for the shoppers.

Their first effort was to ask the proprietors of the garment works to provide lunch rooms upstairs and to keep their industrial children indoors at the noon hour. Then they begged the "children" to walk on the side streets so that their economic betters could use the avenue. In military nations citizens may walk in the gutter out of respect for the king's soldiers on the sidewalk, but these were some unfortunate words written back in 1776 that made this appeal to social civility quite futile on the avenue. So the police were instructed to suggest to the workers that they walk faster, and this led to broken heads, which were more unattractive to the shopping ladies than idle strolling workmen.

The association then called in an industrial engineer, who advised that a law limiting the number of workers to the floor area could be passed on the strength of the popular fear.

Progress was on the march, but alas, the sprinkler men came along and prevailed upon the law to exempt fireproof buildings with the overhead water system. This new turn of affairs caused the industrial engineer's scheme to go kicking into nothingness, the tailors again tramped on the best chiropped feet of the city and the salvation of lower Fifth avenue was again at stake.

At the present time there are several really associations trying to save New York, with especial emphasis on their own particular portion of New York. The Save New York Committee wants to save New York above Thirty-third street, the Central Fifth Avenue Committee wants the saving to go down to the heel of the Flatiron, the Central Mercantile Association wants to save on to Fourteenth street, and below that is the Washington Square Association, which also has a patch of green glory and a stretch of the wide fairway that are much in the saving line.

In short, the garment trade is on the southeast run with no lights of welcome blinking till the old home below Astor place comes into view. But the garment trades are not running very fast; in fact, they do not want to go back into the gutter. They are welcome burn dim in those last century non-fireproof buildings where the boy pulls the elevator up with a rope and the only cement on the floor is that spilled by the man who glues the heels of \$2 trousers.

Nor is the garment trade a thing as easily snuffed from the sidewalk as fiddler crabs from the beach. There are 60,000 of the clothing workers, 80 per cent of them men. These workers with their families would make a town as populous as Indianapolis.

Their industry is the largest producing industry of New York city. Its product in a year would have bought the nation's wheat crop before the war or the bakers, or whoever it was, made the six cent loaf. And it is an industry that is growing with tremendous rapidity. For Americans are wearing more and yet more clothes. Nor will the threat of boycott by a group of uptown stores be a force to move them, for only a small percentage of the clothes made in New York are sold to New Yorkers.

Moreover, the clothing trades are organized, they have their rights to

air and light and decency, and they know it. They know also that the rents they are paying in the Fifth avenue district are exorbitant for their industry and a needless tax on the price of American clothes from Bar Harbor to San Diego.

Then why did the garment trades move into the district where Father Knickerbocker wishes to swing his cane? The answer is: first, to get modern buildings for their work and for their workers, and, second, to get near the uptown shops and near the uptown hotels, where the out of town buyers stop to rub off the cornsilk among New York's elite. "Provide us with modern buildings in our old home," say the garment men, "and prove that the buyer will find us there and we will go back."

It now behooves the saviors of the New Uptown New York to wet the sponge with running gold and rub out the old downtown and build a new garment city below Washington Square. Is this feasible, and does the larger future seeing spirit of the Greater New York with its appalling congestion and almost unsolvable transportation problem want a fourth grown manufacturing industry crowded back into the heart of the island, where it would cause an overflow?

There is but one Manhattan Island, and with uncanny foresight Peter Minuit bought it for the Indians for a trading station. Subsequent events have shown that he was right. A new trading station on the west half of the earth. And where folk come to buy they come to play. And around the world's greatest dollar swapping counter cluster wealth, leisure and culture.

New York is crowded. Laws will stop the sky from growing, but the average height of Manhattan's houses is but four and eight-tenths stories. The present limitation of building laws will flatten out the skyline and make all buildings look alike, but it will not stop the increase of the floor area of Manhattan, which can under the new law yet be multiplied several times.

Manhattan Island is already too full and getting fuller, and building height laws will not stop it. Industrial zoning may make our lady's shopping more pleasant, but it will not long solve the problem of too many people and too many feet of people on the sidewalks. Tubes and elevated railroads and tunnels and viaducts will all help some, but they will not accommodate the people who can live here beneath the new chalk mark on the sky, not to mention the daytime working population that comes to Manhattan Island from outlying residential districts.

Peter Minuit's Island is so full that the sidewalks are not wide enough. Some one must get off the island, not only to sleep nights but to work in the daytime. They can come back to trade—that's what Peter bought the island for—but there is no good excuse for making Manhattan Island a factory town. It is bad for the town, it is bad for the factory and it is especially bad for the worker.

The only thing that has located and kept the garment makers in the heart of Manhattan Island was the competitive necessity of being near, in minutes, to the buyers. Give the clothing trades an ideal factory town within ten minutes of Fifth avenue and Forty-second street, give them ample space, air, light, lower rents, room for expansion, modern factory buildings for their quarters, and economical living quarters for their workers, as far superior to the tenement of New York's East Side as a modern hotel is to a farm house—give the garment trades these essentials to their industrial and their human life and they will gladly and peacefully vacate Fifth avenue, gaining stability for real estate and for the most famous shopping district and play place of the world salvation to its proper use and purpose.

And all these things can be accomplished.

## ZIGZAGGIN' AMONG THANKSGIVING THOUGHTS

By A. PERRY WINCKELMAN.

"WELL," remarked Mr. Finnegan, pensively swallowing a digestive tablet, "Thanksgiving is over and we can all go to knocking' again. We've returned thanks for our merries, that there is of them; an' God knows there's a plenty of them such as they are. Wan day a year spent in feedin' the spiritual nature wid cranberry sauce an' mince pie gives us the right to jine the Anvil Chorus for the other three hundred sixty-four."

"'Twas the Pilgrim Fathers gave us Thanksgiving. They come over to Boston Common in the Mayflower to serve God, rob the savages an' rough-house the Quakers, according to the dictates of their consciences.

"Go to Boston an' they'll show ye a photygraft iv the first Chalk, dressed in a billycock hat, football pants wid ruffles at the knees, an' a hell mouthed blunderbuss, walking up Milk street on his way to divine worship. Irvy Sundah hed conduct family prayers from 6 to 8, breakfast off baked beans and doughnuts and hear the parson band out a few hoarse wins on bed for three hours or thereabout.

"After dinner hed comfort the family be givin' them warm sketches iv the hereafter, and wind up a perfect day wid a walk in the graveyard. Himself was a hardy bird—the Pilgrim Father. No man was let to marry till he could give thanks over an empty dinner pail, skin a Quaker and hang his mother-in-law for a witch widout turnin' a hair.

"He must be able to conduct a prayer meetin', plough, sing psalms and shoot Indians on the wing.

A church deacon could bring down a Mohawk chief wid a blunderbuss widout stoppin' either the chune or the horses.

"Beyant hed beans their food was salt mackerel an' mush, wid coffee made iv rum an' molasses in hot water. Would ye wonder a man would stand for infant demotion, wid his bosom's lord layin' heavy on his stummock like that? Troth, the Diet iv Worms was nawthin' to't.

"That simple Christian life is all

## Finnegan Contrasts the Days of the Pilgrim Fathers With the Present and Finds an Answer to the High Cost of Living Problem

Every day was a Merry Christmas to them folk, an' life was a long crimson sunset.

"'Tis much the same now. Irvy man is yellin' about the high cost iv livin' an' blowin' it in like a drunken sailor at a county fair. All the statesmen at Albany an' Washington is burnin' the midnight electric current, they say they'll lift the crowd burden iv oppression from the backs of the peep-ol.

"For why can't they see what's just happened? 'Twas this a-way. The high cost iv turkey was gone up to forty-five a pound. Two slabs of drumstick an' a gizzard at the restaurant was sold for sixty to ninety cents. And rindin' in our ears was the sad Thanksgiving cry iv the children—save us thirty cent turkey or we perish.

"Infamous," says the patriotic Solons, burnin' wid indignation. Wid turkey at forty-five the pound iv peep-ol where is the liberties iv the peep-ol?

"So they gets busy. The Mayor gets after the wholesalers, an' Hartigan clames the retailers. Professor Mangel Wurzel iv the Agricultural College at Oshkosh (the same that wrote the monograph on the Origin iv Warts on cucumbers), sends a passionate appeal for the people to go back to the turkey pen. An' all the nation is thrilled wid hope when a flash come from Washington that the President has buried himself in solitude to study the high cost iv turkeys.

"The papers says: 'The President is deeply stirred over the infamous conspiracy iv the turkey market. Before payin' gold the morn he conferred for over seven myriads wid the House leaders. Important divil-upmints may be expected soon. It may be stated on high authority that a law will be introduced regulatin' the care, breedin' an' nation of our Nashua bird.

"Wan egg a day will be required from each turkey, regardless iv age or sex. Anny egg laid after 2:30 P. M. will be excluded from interstate commerce. The jooties iv both toms

a note to the hens? All was confusion. 'Twas a slyshashun would tax the wisdom of Solomon.

"All of a sudden, the nashun was disconcerted by the news that the storage turkeys was down ten cents a pound. Everywhere the peep-ol burst forth into joy that was unrelieved. Loud cheers arose from the restaurants an' movies, an' a fight arose in Irvy bar as to who had a right to set 'em up.

"Even the hard-workin' farmhand sewin' shirts at 18 cents a dozen stopped her weary toil to give a shrill cheer.

"What had happened? Had the Mayor converted the wholesalers. Had Hartigan converted the scales? Had Hille Sunday converted the Jews? Neither the war nor the other.

"Here's what happened. The great American Woman horned into the name, an' the boasted wisdom of man became as soundin' brass an' tinklin' cowbells. Yes, sor! All that wealth iv deep-sea 'thinkin' was torpedoed when lovely woman sold her wits.

"What did she say? I'll not tell ye the exact words, for I dinnae think. But the idea was that if she paid anny such price, she'd be damned. An' that settled it.

"I've think she makes it? axes the imminent retailer Idner Shalinsky iv his neighbor Hyman Oederfelder.

"I look at her hands clinch an' her eyes says Hyman. I'm married myself. Hyman says. 'Well call it a fire-sale,' says Moses Klatsco. 'What'll ye give?' he axes. 'Twenty-eight cents,' says lovely woman. 'You're on,' says Moses, an' away goes the price iv turkey.

So there a lesson iv the last Thanksgiving. When the price is too high, have it alone. Need a taxer in the land iver thought iv that—an' mighty few taxpayers. Woman's intuition done the trick.

"Believe ye me, if half the men would love their wives lay out the dough, we'd have less iv the high cost iv livin' an' know more iv the cost iv livin' high. Belike a few thirst-patrons would close, but there'd be less work for the sheriff. Yet they say women's not fit to vote. Wouldn't that jolt ye?

"What ails us mostly is not the scarcity iv food, but the surplus iv suckers. An' when suckers is too plenty the most iv us could reduce the supply by wan, anyway."